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There is an old saying: "Books have their own destiny." Among the billions of publications which appear every year on book-shelves in every country, an ever greater place is being taken by the literature, received from the USSR through international book exchange. These books which tell the truth about the life of Soviet peoples have an honored destiny.

Mutual exchange of literature is the most accessible form of cultural ties between peoples. For the great libraries of the Soviet Union the exchange of printed material with foreign libraries is an old and unbroken tradition. The most ancient of our libraries - the library of the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad -- was carrying on a regular book exchange with scientific institutions of Europe as early as the 60-70s of the 18th Century. But the exchange of foreign literature developed extensively only after the Great October Revolution, when the Communist Party and the Soviet government created all the conditions requisite for library activities.

Even in 1922-1924, special offices were established for an international book exchange at the Academy of Sciences USSR, the All-Union Book Palace and the Society of Foreign Cultural Relations. These offices did much to enlarge international book exchange in the 20s and 30s, but how small-scaled seem their activities in comparison with today's operations! During a 12-year period (1924-1936) the Office of International Book Exchange under the All-Union Book Palace, then playing the role of our national exchange center, sent about 282 thousand publications abroad and received about 290 thousand foreign titles in return. Just last year, libraries in charge of exchange, sent nearly 700,000 publications abroad and received more than 500,000 books, newspapers, and journals.

Today it is hard to find a country on the world map with libraries that do not maintain an exchange program. The Library of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR exchanges literature with academies, libraries and publishers of 85 governments; the Central Scientific Medical Library of the Ministry of Health of the USSR exchanges with 70 countries; and the Library imeni M. Gor'kij of Moscow University with 55 countries. Daily the mail service of Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, L'vov and of many

other cities dispatches packages with the addresses of thousands of scientific establishments and libraries in the most far-off countries.

"We ask that you send," Singhalese libraries write, "even one copy of the classical writers Lev Tolatoy, Pushkin, Chekhov, Gogol', Lermontov, Mayakovskiy, Nekrasov, Gor'kiy, Turgenev, Shevchenko and others in the English language. We will be very happy to receive any literature from the USSR. This would help us attain a better mutual understanding between our peoples, strengthen cultural ties, consolidate friendship, help to collaborate freely in striving for universal happiness, freedom, progress, and peace..." Dozens of such letters come in from Asia, Africa, South America. The peoples of these countries are striving to become acquainted with the experiment of the Soviet peoples in the construction of an independent government, which is thoroughly developed economically and with a new, progressive culture. "Thanks to you I received excellent research material," a Japanese librarian says in his letter. "On returning home each day, I eat hurriedly and sit down about 9 o'clock in the evening to work until 12, but I very frequently pass the whole night until 5 o'clock in the morning without sleeping a wink. The work holds me, and I am delighted that I am ruining my eyes...Like a boy, I do not want to let anyone in Japan get ahead of me in studying library organization in socialist countries."

Historical achievements of the USSR have awoken interest in Soviet literature even in capitalist countries where not long ago Soviet science and engineering were being ignored. In November 1957 the American newspaper, the New York Times, criticized the Library of Congress of the USA for the fact that scientific journals, obtained from the Soviet Union, lie on the shelf and gather dust, while American scientists waste time on questions, long ago solved in the USSR. Now in the USA several dozen Soviet scientific journals are being translated into English. The majority of American universities, scientific societies, laboratories, editors of scientific journals show an interest in our scientific literature and readily enter into an exchange of literature. In a letter to the Library of the USSR imeni V. I. Lenin, a Canadian book firm wrote at the end of last year: "The tremendous success of the Soviet Union in science has substantially heightened the interest of all scientific circles of the USA and Canada in scientific and technical publications, coming out of the USSR. Many libraries which previously collected Soviet books by irregular exchange, now want to start a systematic exchange."

The exchange of literature between libraries of the Soviet Union and capitalist countries could be even broader, if there were not certain

obstacles in the way. The majority of books in bourgeois countries do not fit into international exchange. New artistic, political, scientific and educational literature is published by book firms for sale at a profit. The prices on this literature are usually high, and due to lack of funds it is hard for libraries to acquire them for exchange. Only the largest and richest libraries are in a position to send our libraries literature, put out by private publishing houses, and in the majority of cases they exchange gratis publications of scientific societies and institutions, government publications and out-dated material.

Other types of obstacles are met: time after time printed matter and books are sent back stamped in the language of the official documents, "distribution prohibited in country of addresses." The Turkish postal authorities returned "Vizantiyskiy Vremennik," an academic publication on events that occurred at least five hundred years ago. One of the South American countries was frightened over the appearance of the scientific journal "Agrobiologiya," in which charts and diagrams took up more space than did the text. These absurd prohibitions of our scientific publications can only be explained by ignorance and hatred of everything that comes out of the Soviet Union. Fortunately, such cases are becoming rarer all the time.

A convincing example of friendly cooperation and mutual aid in international cultural ties is the exchange of literature between the libraries of the USSR and other socialist countries. It is based on the fullest satisfaction of mutual inquiries and has a most diversified character; it takes in artistic and political literature, scientific and technical books, and other categories of printed material. This makes it possible for readers and scientific workers of each socialist country to receive in good time the books, papers, or journals that they need.

Our scientific, technical, and educational literature offers great practical assistance to the people's intelligentsia and scientists of the socialist countries. Perhaps the lines from a letter of the workers of the library of the Harbin Polytechnical Institute to the Library of the USSR imeni V. I. Lenin speak best on this subject: "In socialist construction, the Chinese people constantly receive disinterested and international assistance from the great Soviet people. This also applies to the Harbin Polytechnical Institute, which is a new-type polytechnic institute and which was created with the direct aid of Soviet specialists. The professors and the majority of the students can read Russian literature, therefore books, journals and documents in the Russian language for our library are needed very badly. We particularly need Russian scientific-technical books and journals."

With a feeling of great satisfaction and joy, the workers of many dozens, if not hundreds, of our libraries are filling orders received from Peiping, Prague, Budapest, Sofia, Bucharest, Tirana, Pyongyang and other cities of socialist countries.

Our libraries not only carry on a wide book exchange program, but take an active part in the arrangements of UNESCO on enlarging the international exchange of printed publications.

International book exchange is the contribution of our library workers to the struggle for peace, friendship and expanding cultural ties between the peoples of the whole world.

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